

Planning Board Meeting
December 16, 2014
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Present: Chair Bill Nebelski, Dorianne Almann, George Benedict, Clare Hudon, Morris Klein, Alternate James MacDonell (in the audience), Selectmen's Rep Joan Morel, Dwight Smith (arrived at 6:34 pm), Stefan Zielonko. Three members of the public were present.

Mr. Nebelski called the meeting to order at 6:31 pm. He read the public hearing on the application for Minor Site Plan Development Review submitted by Monument Road Solar LLC, tax map 29 lot 10, 342 Monument Road., in the Rural Agricultural District. The applicant proposes to build a Community Solar Garden Array.

He asked if there were any representatives present. None were. Mr. Klein asked if the committee should table the review. Mr. Nebelski replied the committee did not have to do anything.

Mr. Nebelski moved to the next item on the agenda, the Master Plan. Ms. Morel said she had some minor edits and gave them to Mr. Nebelski. Ms. Hudon made a motion to accept the Master Plan draft with the edits submitted, was seconded by Mr. Zielonko, and the motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Nebelski told the committee that Mr. MacDonell was stepping down as Planning Board alternate and that he had submitted a letter of resignation. Mr. Nebelski said the letter is "accepted with regret." Mr. MacDonell said he still plans to work on the solar array ordinance; there's "a bit of time" between now and January 9, 2014 which is the last day to post/publish notice for the first hearing on proposed adoptions/amendments of zoning ordinances.

Mr. Nebelski brought up the solar array and after looking at the plan, the board began discussion. Mr. Nebelski noted he was interested in a site visit and wanted the town's engineer to look at the plan. Mr. Klein asked why the applicant had not come to the Planning Board. "They didn't need to," replied Ms. Morel, elaborating that Rodney Lawrence, the Building Inspector, could send the applicant directly to the ZBA. Alternatively, the applicant could have come before the Planning Board and the PB could have sent the applicant to the ZBA.

Mr. Nebelski asked the board for their thoughts on a site visit. The board concurred that a site visit was desirable. Mr. Klein said he was interested in details related to the storm drains. Mr. Benedict felt that the plan was weak in that details were lacking. Mr. Nebelski felt that the project should be bonded or the town should have a letter of credit to avoid difficulties associated with partial completion of the plan. Mr. Klein said the project needs poles and lines. Mr. Smith asked why drainage is needed. Mr. Zielonko said that since the panels are up on poles, rain dripping from them will create troughs. Mr. Nebelski wondered about the presence of wetlands. Mr. Benedict asked if the ground slopes. Mr. Klein replied that it does; there's about a 40' drop.

Mr. Klein went on to discuss the different types of solar panels, telling the board that some of the newer panels have mini-converters attached to each panel that turns direct current into alternate current.

Having gone as far as they could without a representative present from Monument Road Solar, the board discussed Mr. MacDonell's resignation. Mr. Klein made a motion to accept Mr. MacDonell's letter of resignation as alternate to the Planning Board effective December 11, 2014, was seconded by Mr. Benedict, and the motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Nebelski told the board that Roberta Cook had submitted an application as alternate to the Planning Board. She wants to get involved with bringing new businesses into town. Ms. Hudon made a motion to accept Ms. Cook as an alternate to the Planning Board, was seconded by Mr. Benedict, and the motion passed unanimously.

At 6:53 pm, CDC Kathryn Lynch arrived.

Morris Klein made a motion to accept the application dated 12/1/2014 from Monument Rd. Solar LLC. He was

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seconded by Dorianne Almann, and the motion passed unanimously. Andrew Keller from NH Solar Garden apologized for being late there was confusion with the time of the meeting. Mr. Keller explained that the ZBA granted a Variance for the solar array. Mr. Keller explained about a year ago New Hampshire's governor signed Group Net Metering into law. It took about six months after that for projects to be developed. Following development of interim rules in January 2014 people associated with solar farm projects began to talk to towns around the state. Community solar gardens are built at one central location and the energy is shared with community participants. They connect with infrastructure at the street. People can join or sign up for the rebate program, they will receive about 1 cent per kilowatt hour. They plan to start this project in the spring. Plan shows layout, setback, size and letter from their engineer about storm water run-off.

Chair Nebelski asked if any members of the public had questions or concerns, hearing none the public portion of the meeting was closed. Chair Nebelski asked for questions from the Board. Morris Klein asked what the voltage of the panels were and how are they linked. Mr. Keller explained that it depends on the manufacturer that they choose but the panels range from 310-410 watts and they can be linked a couple of ways. Either a micro-converter package or converter system. Morris Klein commented that he would like to see on the plan the footprint the distance to the pole and would like the disconnects to be the closest to the poles as possible. Mr. Keller explained that all the plans have to be approved by PSNH and that there is a lot of focus on details, Morris Klein asked if the area would be fenced off in case someone happens to come upon it and touches it they could be hurt. Mr. Keller explained that the voltage is low, about 57 volts, and it doesn't need to be fenced off, and all the switch gear is enclosed. Security cameras are onsite and they monitor them often. Dorianne Almann asked about the two systems, when is the determination made. Mr. Keller explained that they have used multiple sources for the panels, they haven't decided which to use yet, and the panels they choose will not have an impact on the design. Mr. Keller explained that PSNH requires a transformer and they look to PSNH for guidance. PSNH has to approve the project. Clare Hudon asked how the panels are installed. Mr. Keller explained that there is a 5 ft. pole that goes into the ground, they have cement footers, but there are not cement pads under the panels. Mr. Keller explained that solar arrays are often installed on top of old land fills where there can be no disturbance to the ground. So when installing solar arrays they try to do as little disturbance to the ground as possible. Mr. Keller explained that they have liability insurance, this is in the lease between them and the homeowner. CDC Kathryn Lynch explained that the Planning Board does not require the applicant to show proof of insurance it is the responsibility of the home owner. The Planning Board has required Bonds or Letters of Credits for projects in the past. Dorianne Almann asked what if the homeowner sells prior to the 20 year lease. Mr. Keller explained that the lease goes with the home. Decommissioning is the land owner's responsibility. Clare Hudon asked if the array can be seen from the road, (no). Selectman Morel asked about the maintenance of the site. Mr. Keller explained that they monitor the site and will receive text alerts to remove snow or do regular maintenance of the panels. They mow the grass twice a year. The Board spoke about tabling the meeting till next month so they could have the Town Engineer look at the project, receive a Letter of Credit, do a Site Walk of the property and have more information on the Site Plan. The Board wants the Engineer to look specifically at the runoff at the site and how it will impact culverts on Old Brattleboro Rd. The Board would also like the Town Engineer to explain if pea stone should be used under the panels so a trough is not formed and if they recommend a berm around the site.

CDC Kathryn Lynch will contact the landowner to see when the Board can do a site walk, weekend early mornings are best for the Board. CDC Kathryn Lynch will contact the Town's Engineer. An escrow amount will be given to NH Solar Garden and the Town's Engineer will review the project and will contact the applicant. Mr. Keller will bring a Letter of Credit to the next meeting. Mr. Keller will add more information to the Site Plan as requested by the Board. Morris Klein made a motion to continue the meeting to January 21, 2014. He was seconded by Clare Hudon. The motion passed unanimously.

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Board Business:

CDC Kathryn Lynch brought a business form to the Board for their review. More information was attached from the Health and Code Officer, Rodney Lawrence. The Board reviewed and instructed CDC Kathryn Lynch to ask Mr. Lawrence to proceed with code violations at the property and asked Ms. Lynch to send a letter to the home owner explaining home occupation/home office. Their business should not have an outward appearance of a business and their land cannot be used to store items for their business.

Letter received from NH Liquor Commission for 8 George's Field, Board has no comments to add.

Letter received from NH DOT explaining culvert work that will be done on Rt. 63.

Clare Hudon made a motion to approve the minutes as amended dated November 18, 2014. She was seconded by Stefan Zielonko. Motion passed, with George Benedict abstaining.

With no other business to discuss, Morris Klein made a motion to adjourn. He was seconded by Dorianne Almann. The motion passed unanimously and the meeting ended at 8:10pm.

Respectfully submitted,

CDC Kathryn Lynch
Dorianne Almann, Secretary